About 700 TRUE members, CSEA classified employees and members of the community crowded into the TRUSD Board room to let the Board Members and Superintendent Frank Porter know that they are not happy with the way the District is being run. CSEA members started outside before the Board Meeting with an informational session as many held up signs saying “SAVE OUR SCHOOLS”. Many teachers and classified workers expressed their disgust with the maintenance of the classrooms around the District, due to the layoffs of many custodians. One teacher had fleas in her classroom and had to purchase product herself to get rid of them. Others stated that they have rodents and roaches due to the trash not being emptied regularly. Parents expressed anger that they are sending their children to school to learn, and instead they are cleaning their classrooms and taking out trash.

Inside the Board meeting, unhappy and disgusted parents urged the Board to reconsider the recommendation to close North Avenue and Larchmont elementary schools. TRUE President John Ennis addressed the Board regarding the $5 million dollars the District has spent on lawyers and $2 million more on consultants. Members of the African-American community are concerned about the academic performance of the TRUSD African-American students.

In addition to all of the turmoil at the Board Meeting, the Board is having internal turmoil. Trustee Alecia Chasten has asked the District Attorney’s office to investigate Brown Act violations and discrimination by Superintendent Frank Porter. Mrs. Chasten has also submitted documents showing a lack of diversity in employee promotions and hiring in the District.

Ann Murray
TRUE News Editor
President’s Message

November 15, 2010

As you know, we are at bargaining impasse with the District. At the November 9th School Board meeting the District saw that we are severely disappointed in their choices and the state of our relationship. With impasse we anticipate a 5-6 month process that includes mediation, fact-finding and negotiations. Over these 5 or 6 months we have various ways to demonstrate our dissatisfaction with the District.

On November 30, 2010, we believe the District will announce the closure of Larchmont Elementary and North Avenue Elementary. This will affect about 26 teachers and other staff. We hope the process is smoother than last year’s school closures. TRUE will be watching over the process to make sure all educators’ rights are protected; we will negotiate with the District the procedure/steps to be followed.

Other changes in the horizon: the District plans to close Foothill Farms Junior High School, rename it and reopen it as a 5-8 grade school. Woodridge Elementary would be a K-4th grade school.

I hope all TRUE members have a restful winter break. The 2011 year will be another difficult time for educators. TRUE asks its members to get actively involved and participate in different activities such as the recent Board Meeting Rally on Nov. 9th. At the rally TRUE members were forceful and articulate, and delivered a clear message to the District. It is crucial that more and more educators come forth to voice their concerns to the Board. Sign up now to attend one or more School Board meetings; to do so, contact your Site Rep or the TRUE office (true.office@yahoo.com).

Have a great vacation!

John Ennis
TRUE President

TRUE Listening Sessions

TRUE Listening Sessions took place November 3rd at both Highlands High School and Foothill High School, and November 4th at both Grant High School and Rio Linda High School. Approximately 200 TRUE members were in attendance at the sessions. These sessions provided members with an opportunity to share their concerns with the TRUE Executive Board and to express their feelings with regards to the District’s Last, Best, and Final negotiations offer. After an overview of the proposal by a negotiations team member, TRUE members were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions. Members expressed their appreciation for the Listening Sessions and would like to see more communication coming from the Executive board.

TRUE members in attendance expressed their extreme dissatisfaction with the District’s proposal. “Are you serious?!” seemed to be the question of the day. Members were concerned that the District would impose this terrible offer on the certificated employees. They shared their desire to see the District cut other places first. Many members suggested cuts at the management level. With the District management taking about 7% of the budget, there is room for cuts. “Our District has too many Associate Superintendents. Other nearby Districts our size need only four Associate Superintendents to run their District.” Other TRUE Members suggested cutting or eliminating school police services, cutting funding to sports programs, and eliminating free student bussing.

TRUE members felt the District is trying to take advantage of them. “We are being asked to work more for less. We have more students, less support, and more expectations placed upon us. Now the District wants to hit us in the pocket book with massive pay cuts.” Several members felt second jobs would be needed if the proposed cuts were imposed. Other members felt the District should offer us concessions if they want us to consider this proposal. All members in attendance supported the Executive Board’s decision of NO additional concessions this school year.

Most of the members in attendance wanted to take action. Some members suggested bringing their trash to the School Board meetings. Others suggested working to rule. All of the members agreed with the NO concessions stance and vowed to unite to fight further cuts.

Julianne Neal
TRUE Director-at-Large for Elementary
Negotiations Update

Negotiations progress stalled in early November, as Twin Rivers Unified School District filed for impasse. The current contract is in effect until June 2011. TRUE has been negotiating re-opener language with the District during the past year. Last year, after about six months of negotiations, it appeared that the District was willing to agree to contractual changes where a large number of grievances had been filed by our membership. The county of Sacramento issued the District a warning letter for their adopted budget this summer which showed a negative balance in 2012-2013. Based on this letter, the District feels it needs additional concessions from our membership.

After meeting with the Executive Board, Representative Council and attending the General Membership meeting, our negotiation position is to hold to no further financial concessions for 2010-2011. As of October, the District projects a beginning balance next year of 27 million. We feel with this very large reserve and additional money received for this year, sacrifices should not be made now for future years.

During the impasse process a State Mediator will be assigned to work with both groups. Currently, we do not know the schedule for this process, but anticipate it lasting several months. If nothing is resolved during the impasse process, we would then move on to fact finding.

In Fact-Finding a State appointed Arbitrator will analyze the District's budget, future projections, etc. and based on a complete review of both sides' arguments, writes a report. The report can be for either the District's side, or on TRUE’s side. The report can also recommend some sort of compromise. The Fact-Finding Report is not binding for either side.

Paul LeFrancois  
TRUE Lead Negotiator

Why Organize?

Most teachers that I have worked with over the last thirty years have several things in common.

- One, they love the work. There is a wonderful satisfaction when you have labored on a daily basis and finally the student gets it! I have cried when a struggling first grade student passed that infamous level three and is catapulted into the realm of becoming a reader.

- The second commonality is that we never thought we would get rich but we do expect to be able to support our families, to have health coverage, and to be able to retire with some element of security.

The days of female teachers providing their families with a second income have long since passed. In this the 21st century, we are men and women who provide vital support for our families with very little wiggle room in these tough economic times.

We are beginning a series of individual meetings with our Site Reps. All TRUE members need to be currently informed as we negotiate through this impasse and mediation time frame. As we work together to re-organize ourselves for action, communicating is one of the key elements that will support our ability to act as a unified organization. The District administration is betting on our not being able to do this. They are mistaken.

We have formed an organizing team that has met several times and will continue through this year and beyond as we plan our strategic actions on behalf of you, the Twin Rivers United Educators.

Jeanie Stockton & Kristin Finney  
TRUE Organizing Chairs

“All ORGANIZING IS RE-ORGANIZING”

“Power is the ability to act -it is relational, social, and you cannot have power by yourself”

Industrial Areas Foundation
**Right of School Employees to Have Assistance of a Union Representative**

**Weingarten and Related Rights**

What are the Weingarten Rights? A school district employee has a right to Union representation and the Union has a right to represent the employee in certain situations such as the following:

- Meetings or interviews with the employer which the public school employee reasonably believes might result in discipline, the member must request or representation will be waived

- Interactions with management in highly unusual circumstances, such as discussing a negative evaluation with management who was not the evaluator

- The employee is making non-contractual complaints against the employer

- The employee wishes to discuss contractual entitlements before a decision has been made, for example the right to a leave of absence.

If the employer denies the request for union representation and the employee is entitled to representation, the employer commits an unfair practice. The employee may refuse to answer and the employer may not discipline the employee.

Keeping a log, diary or notes of some kind is a very good idea anytime you have to meet with your employer regarding serious issues. This is most likely an emotional time and you cannot rely on your memory. Writing down what happened gives you a complete record of everything that has transpired and it also helps you to recall information later.
In a nutshell, the Association has the “duty to fairly represent” all individuals covered by the collective bargaining agreement. It must treat everyone fairly. The Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA) states in government code section 3544.9: “The employee organization recognized for the purpose of meeting and negotiating shall fairly represent each and every employee in the appropriate unit.”

The Duty of Fair Representation covers bargaining wages, hours and working conditions. It includes enforcing the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), commonly known as “the contract”, through the grievance process. The Association must conduct its representation in such a manner that its actions are not arbitrary, discriminatory, or conducted in bad faith. An action would be arbitrary if it is “without a rational basis or devoid of honest judgment.” Discriminatory actions involve the treating of groups or individuals differently because of some characteristic, e.g., non-membership in the union, race or national origin, occupational category, etc. Bad faith usually refers to treatment based on personal dislike or animosity. The Association must and will act reasonably, fairly, and honestly toward all employees in the bargaining unit.

In order to represent all employees fairly, the Association seeks input from the entire bargaining unit at the beginning of negotiations and prior to ratification. It works hard to avoid intentionally misrepresenting any fact or term of the contract in order to secure votes for ratification. Although it may not want to, the Association may be forced to accept bargaining provisions with a negative impact on some unit members, provided there is a rational basis for doing so. The standard must involve perceiving a benefit to the unit as a whole or to promote a more fair approach. In bargaining reasonable contract provisions, the Association attempts to implement a strategy that assures “the greatest good for the greatest number” of affected employees.

The CBA (contract) includes an entire section on the steps involved in the grievance process. Under the terms of the agreement made by TRUE with the Twin Rivers Unified School District, each bargaining unit member, including those who have not joined the union, have opposed the union or its leadership, or taken contrary positions in internal union politics, has the right to file a grievance on their own behalf or have the Association weigh in on their behalf. When asked to assist, the Association will review all alleged violations of the contract, assist in filing the grievance, and seek to have the District implement the changes necessary to bring the District’s actions into compliance with the contract.

Finally a number of member concerns are not covered by the duty of fair representation. Although the Association may listen to and have a sympathetic ear for the “gripes” of members, there is little it can do if the concern is not covered by the collective bargaining agreement. Likewise, the Association is only an advisory agent concerning member complaints involving violations of District policies and procedures, and state and federal laws and policies.

Chuck Denonn
TRUE Contract Enforcement Committee Chair

TRUE Elementary Teachers Meeting

Please join us to share your celebrations and concerns. The location for this meeting will be the TRUE Office, 3318 Howard Street, Suite 10. Our next Elementary Teachers Meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2010, at 4:00p.m.

We would like to have meetings with elementary teachers held at different schools around the District. If you would like to volunteer your classroom for one of these meetings, send an e-mail to julieanneneal1@surewest.net. Please join us as we work to improve working conditions for all teachers.

Julieanne Neal
TRUE Director-at-Large for Elementary
NEA Resolutions Committee Open Hearing

TRUE member Chuck Denonn held an Open Hearing on behalf of the NEA Resolutions Committee at the CTA Region 2 conference. Chuck is one of seventeen CTA members elected by their peers to represent CTA members on the NEA Resolutions Committee; he represents all CTA members working in the Capital Service Center Council area. TRUE member Jeannie Stockton joined other conference participants at the Open Hearing.

During the Open Hearing, Chuck discussed the work of the NEA Resolutions Committee and solicited input for changes to the 2010 Report of the Resolutions Committee. Resolutions are formal expressions of opinion, intent, belief, or position of the National Education Association. The resolutions set forth the positions of the NEA in broad, clear, concise language.

Members can make input to the Resolutions Committee at open hearings conducted at the Regional Conferences, Service Center Council meetings, CTA Conferences such as the Issues Conference and Minority Affairs Conference and direct contact with any Resolutions committee member. The Resolutions committee will consider all recommendations at its Winter Meeting in February and finalize a report at the Summer Meeting at next year’s NEA Representative Assembly. Capital area members can make direct contact with Chuck Denonn at cdenonn@peoplepc.com.

Last year, the Resolutions Committee reviewed 83 business items. At the 2009 NEA RA, delegates accepted 39 of these items as amendments to the NEA Resolutions Document. The final Resolutions Report is available on the NEA website, www.nea.org

Chuck Denonn
TRUE Director-at-Large for Grades 7-12

CTA Scholarships Available

CTA offers various scholarships every year, below are some of the scholarships that are being offered in 2011. To get more information go to cta.org click on About CTA and click on CTA Foundation/Scholarships.

2011 CTA Cesar E. Chavez Memorial Education Awards Program (Deadline January 14, 2011) – this program is designed to provide recognition for teams of students and teachers who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles by which Cesar E. Chavez lived his life. The Awards Program honors his memory and ensures that the spirit of his work continues in the classrooms of California. There are two award categories, Group Project and Individual Project. The top prize winners will receive recognition and up to $1,000 for both students and CTA members. Group entries will share the award. For the current school year, eligible projects must fit into the category of either Written Essays or Visual Arts.

Scholarship for Dependent Children (Deadline February 4, 2011) – 35 scholarships are awarded in this category, based upon academic achievement $5,000 scholarships go to dependents of active, retired or deceased CTA members.

Del A. Weber Scholarship for Dependent Children (Deadline February 4, 2011) – offers one $5,000 scholarship to a dependent child of an active, retired or deceased CTA member. The dependent child must use the scholarship for the purpose of attending a continuing high school or an alternative education program

CTA Scholarship for Members (Deadline February 4, 2011) – offers up to five scholarships of $3,000 each to current CTA members who are completing college course work.

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship (Deadline March 4, 2011) – this scholarship is given in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to aid ethnic minority members in preparation of teaching related careers in public education.
Congratulations to our 2011 California Teacher of the Year
- Kadhir Rajagopal -

My ultimate goal everyday is to get students to master the objective I have taught during class before they leave my room.” — Kadhir Rajagopal

For seven years Rajagopal has taught Algebra I and Special Day Class Math and English. He has also taught or tutored in Berkeley Alternative High School and two Oakland secondary schools.

“I put more emphasis on students’ mastery of key concepts than simply racing through concepts,” added Rajagopal. “I teach with the belief that my students’ lives depend on their success in my class. If my students fail, I would feel like I am a doctor who has failed his patients. If they fail, I fail. This belief is at the heart of my teaching.”

Rajagopal earned a B.A. in 2003 from University of California, Berkeley; a M.A. in education in 2005 from the University of San Francisco; and a doctorate in education in 2010 from California State University, Sacramento. Rajagopal also holds administrative and special education credentials.

Rajagopal teaches 9-11 grade mathematics at Grant Union High School in the Twin Rivers Unified School District.

-Article taken from CTA.org

TRUE Scholarships

A new process and application will be put into place this year for the TRUE Scholarship. We will have only one scholarship period a year. Scholarships will be awarded only in spring.

We have a meeting set for Wednesday, December 15th, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at the TRUE office. If you would like to give input on how scholarships will be awarded, please join us at this meeting. The goal of the meeting is to develop the process for selecting applicants, developing an application, and determining how much money to award scholarship recipients.

Sharon Reichelt
TRUE Scholarship Chair

THE
DAY OF THE
SPECIAL
EDUCATOR

CELEBRATE DECEMBER 3, 2010

Being a special educator takes an extra bit of dedication and love. The Day of the Special Educator recognizes the hard work, commitment and passion of those who work with students who have special needs.

This special day was proclaimed by the California State Legislature. For celebration ideas and ways to get your community involved, email president@carsplus.org.
TRUE NEWS
November

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